

R242

R 1178611BYLWIVBYL

AM-NUN

SAO PAULO, Feb 12, REUTER -- A BRAZILIAN NUN SAID TODAY SHE WAS BEATEN AND GIVEN ELECTRIC SHOCKS BY TWO SAO PAULO POLICEMEN WHO ARRESTED HER AND ACCUSED HER OF SHOPLIFTING.

SISTER MARLY DE FATIMA LINDO, 26, TOLD REPORTERS THE TWO OFFICERS THREATENED TO HANG HER FROM THE CEILING BY HER TOES UNLESS SHE CONFESSED TO STEALING A 50 DOLLAR SKIRT FROM A MAJOR DEPARTMENT STORE.

SISTER MARLY MADE THE ALLEGATIONS AT A PRESS CONFERENCE CALLED BY THE SAO PAULO ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

A POLICE SPOKESMAN SAID THE CASE WAS UNDER INVESTIGATION.

"WE HAVE NO CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE ALLEGED TORTURE," HE SAID.

SISTER MARLY, WHO BELONGS TO AN ITALIAN CONVENT, NEAR SAO PAULO, SAID SHE WAS WAITING AT A BUS STOP LAST THURSDAY, WEARING ORDINARY CLOTHES AND WITHOUT IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, WHEN THE POLICEMEN PUT HER INTO A CAR.

DURING A DAY-LONG SESSION IN A DENSEMENT CELL OF ONE OF THE CITY'S DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS SHE WAS BEATEN ON THE HEAD, GIVEN REPEATED ELECTRIC SHOCKS AND STRUCK ON THE PALMS OF HER HANDS WITH CLUBS, SHE SAID.

MORE 2122 EP

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R 1179812BYLWIVZYR

AM-NUN 2 SAO PAULO

SHE SAID THE POLICEMEN REFUSED TO BELIEVE SHE WAS A NUN OR TO LET HER TELEPHONE THE CONVENT. SHE RECITED HAIL MARY'S ALOUD DURING THE ELECTRIC SHOCKS BUT FINALLY CONFESSED IN ORDER TO STOP THE TORTURE, SISTER MARLY SAID.

"I JUST COULDN'T TAKE IT ANY LONGER," SHE SAID.

THE OFFICER HEADING THE INVESTIGATION INTO SISTER MARLY'S CHARGES, RUBENS PRATES DE FONSECA, SAID THE NUN HAD IDENTIFIED THE TWO MEN FROM PHOTOGRAPHS OF 24 POLICE OFFICERS.

ONE OF THEM ADMITTED TO ARRESTING HER ON SUSPICION OF SHOPLIFTING BUT SAID HE DID SO INSIDE THE SHOP AND AFTER A SECURITY GUARD HAD CALLED HIM IN, MR FONSECA SAID.

FATHER WILLIAM REINHARD, A U.S. ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST, SAID THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF CASES LIKE SISTER MARLY'S. "THAT'S WHY WE CALLED THE PRESS CONFERENCE, NOT JUST BECAUSE SHE IS A NUN BUT BECAUSE MOST OF THESE CASES NEVER REACH THE PUBLIC."

ALLEGATIONS OF POLICE BRUTALITY IN BRAZIL HAVE INCREASED SHARPLY IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS AND SOME NEWSPAPERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS BLAME THE FORCE FOR CONTRIBUTING TO A CURRENT WAVE OF STREET VIOLENCE IN RIO DE JANEIRO.

MORE 2124 EP

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R 1180213BYLWIVUIV

AM-NUN 3 SAO PAULO

A RECENT CASE WHICH CAUGHT THE HEADLINES IS OF A 29-YEAR-OLD RIO CLERK, FRANCISCO DO ROSARIO BARBOSA, WHO WAS TAKEN OFF A BUS IN THE FASHIONABLE FLAMENGO DISTRICT LAST WEEK DURING A ROUTINE POLICE IDENTITY CHECK.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER HE WAS DUMPED AT A HOSPITAL SO BADLY INJURED THAT HE DIED 15 MINUTES LATER AFTER GASPING OUT TO DOCTORS: "I WAS BEATEN UP BY THE FLAMENGO POLICE."

THE CASE CAUSED A STIR IN RIO AND IS UNDER INVESTIGATION. REUTER 2126 EP.

~~SECRET~~  
Brazil